Gaps in Employment

If you have gaps of unemployment between jobs, you should offer some explanation. If you have been seeking employment for a while, it is legitimate to write "job hunting". If you have been attending school or training, you should certainly note that.

No Work History

If you have no formal work history, don't panic. In the Work History section of the application, list any volunteer, charitable, or casual labor jobs you may have had. Some casual labor jobs might include babysitting for others, doing lawn work, assisting a neighbor with painting his house, assisting on your family's farm or ranch. List anything that will show that you know what is expected in the work place.

References

Typically, you should list 3 references on your job application. Your references should not be family, but rather, individuals who have knowledge of your work habits, such as a former employer, or someone in an organization you have worked closely with.

Employers really do contact references. So, be sure you have contacted the people you wish to use as a reference and have their permission to do so.

TOP TEN TIPS FOR COMPLETING JOB APPLICATIONS:

1. Write a "model" application with all dates, work history and references. Make a copy to carry with you for easy reference when completing other applications.

2. Use a computer when possible. If you write it out, use a black pen, and write or print neatly. Check your spelling. Remember: *Neatness counts.*

3. Answer each question. If the question does not apply to you, write "NA" Don't just leave it blank. The employer may think you have just overlooked it.

4. If you do not have a phone, provide the number of someone who can easily contact you.

5. If you lack work experience, be creative (but honest). List any volunteer work or life experiences related to the skills needed for the job.

6. Note your education, whether it is a college education, high school diploma, GED or the fact that you are working toward your GED. (Be sure to list the date you expect to complete your GED.)

7. Be sure to sign and date the application. Most unsigned applications are automatically rejected.

8. Write "will discuss at interview" if you have something you prefer to explain in person, such as having been fired from a job, or if you have a felony conviction.

9. Attach a copy of your resume to the application.

10. Make sure you have permission to use the people you list as references. And ensure that their address and phone numbers are listed correctly.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING JOB APPLICATIONS

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JOB SERVICE

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Tips For Completing Job Applications

On the surface, filling out a job application seems easy. Right? Actually, completing an *effective* job application takes time and a great deal of thought. The application is your one opportunity to make a good first impression.

Remember— You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

If you do a careful, neat and thorough job when completing your application, you demonstrate to a potential employer that you are a careful, neat and thorough worker.

By the same token, a sloppy application filled with misspelled words, spaces left blank, and words crossed out indicates to an employer that you don't care enough to work at completing a good application; and therefore, would probably not work hard at a job either.

Your Appearance Matters

Be well groomed and dressed appropriately when you pick up and drop off applications. Remember—you are trying to convince a potential employer that you would make a good employee.
That very first impression makes an impact!

Creating a Model Application

One suggestion for always having the information necessary for any application you may complete is to create a "model" application that you can carry with you during your job search. Since many employers prefer to use the "generic" application available through the local workforce centers, our suggestion is to pick up one at your local workforce center and fill it out thoroughly. The generic application is available at www.employlakecounty.com for download. You may choose to save it as a Word document for easy revisions.

When completing the application, be sure to provide complete job descriptions of your previous jobs, fill in the dates of employment and list at least three references.

Please feel free to make an appointment with any of the Employment Specialists at the local workforce center to have someone review your application and offer any needed suggestions for improvement.

Once you have your application the way you want it, it then becomes your *"model"* application. Make a copy and carry it in your wallet or purse to have as a tool for completing any applications for potential employers.

AVOID RED FLAG WORDS

Reason for leaving your last job

Certain words, such as "fired, quit, personal reasons" all raise red flags with employers. There are other words to use that are much more effective and positive to explain why you are no longer at your last job. For example, instead of "fired," you might write "Involuntary separation", or "will discuss at interview." If you quit a job, writing "resigned" or "voluntary separation" sounds more positive.

If you have ever been convicted of a felony, you may wish to refer to our brochure entitled, *"Tips for Completing an Effective Job Application (even if your past is not so hot)."*

If you need any assistance with completing your application, please feel free to make an appointment with an Employment Specialist.

Our services are offered at no cost to you.